

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6208

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Local Government, January 18, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to public hospital district health and wellness promotion activities and superintendent appointment and removal.

**Brief Description:** Concerning public hospital district health and wellness promotion activities and superintendent appointment and removal.

**Sponsors:** Senators Takko and Short.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Local Government: 1/18/18 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows a public hospital district to provide facilities and services that promote health, wellness, and prevention of illness and injury.
- Authorizes a public hospital district board of commissioners to appoint or remove a hospital superintendent at the same meeting—as opposed to a subsequent meeting—that the matter is introduced.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Takko, Chair; Palumbo, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Member; Angel and Liias.

**Staff:** Greg Vogel (786-7413)

**Background:** Public hospital districts (district) are local government entities that provide hospitals and other health care facilities and services, including emergency medical care services. A district is created by the passage of a voter-approved ballot proposition. Districts may be county-wide or include area from one or more counties within its boundaries, but may not divide a voting precinct. Each district is governed by a board of elected commissioners (board). Districts are authorized to impose regular, non-voter approved property tax levies to finance their facilities and services, in addition to the charges for using

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facilities and services. More than 50 public hospital districts exist in the state, with most districts located in rural areas.

Each board is responsible for appointing a hospital superintendent who serves as the chief administrative officer of the public hospital district. The superintendent is appointed to the position for an indefinite time but can be removed at the will of the board. Appointments and removals of superintendents are done by resolution, which are introduced at a regular meeting and adopted at a subsequent meeting by a majority vote of the board.

**Summary of Bill:** The terms other health care facilities and other health care services are expanded, so that districts may now provide facilities and services that promote health, wellness, and prevention of illness and injury.

Appointments and removals of superintendents may now be introduced and adopted at the same meeting, rather than introduced, then adopted at a subsequent meeting.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This is a good efficiency bill for hospital districts, allowing them to do something in one meeting instead of two. Additionally, districts have always thought they had the authority to do all of these things around health promotional activities. However, in conversations with the state auditor, that authority has been questioned. Hospital districts fund programs to promote health and wellness for residents in the district, for example, swimming lessons for third graders, advanced basics of bicycling, and fire prevention programs. By changing the language of the statute, more prevention efforts can occur, health and wellness is increased in the community, and these activities, subsequently, offset future health care costs.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Dean Takko, Prime Sponsor; Lisa Thatcher, Washington Public Hospital Districts; Robin Fenn, Verdant Health Commission.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.